

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/740,371

Examiner

Kelly Campen

Applicant(s)

ETKIN, JAMES M.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to Appeal Brief filed 3/13/2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-9.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claims 10-50 have been canceled.

Election/Restrictions

This application is in condition for allowance except for the presence of claims 10-50 directed to a non-elected without traverse. Accordingly, claims 10-50 have been cancelled.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-9 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The overall claimed combination of a computerized bidding method for matching hospitality facility data, representing vendors furnishing hotel facilities, meeting room facilities or other hospitality facilities, with requirement data, representing respective necessities of a plurality of meeting planners for a corresponding plurality of meetings or events, the bidding and matching method utilizing a client-server network with at least one server and a plurality of client

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computer systems, the method comprising the steps of: as a computerized method: storing the hospitality facility data and the requirement data in a database on the at least one server, the hospitality facility data at least including vendor contact data, room quantity data and amenity data; gathering requirement offer data and planner contact data from the plurality of meeting planners, the gathered requirement offer data including facilities requirements data; matching requirement offer data with the hospitality facility data; presenting blinded requirement data, without revealing the identity of the corresponding meeting planner who supplied the requirement offer data, to vendors associated with the hospitality facility data which match the facilities requirements data; gathering specific hospitality facility data from the vendors relative to the presented blinded requirement data including price data; presenting, to the corresponding meeting planner who supplied the requirement data, blinded specific hospitality facility data responsive to the requirement offer data; permitting the corresponding meeting planner to select blinded specific hospitality facility data from a predetermined number of vendors; enabling direct communications with the exchange of vendor and planner contact data between the predetermined number of vendors and the corresponding meeting planner supplying the requirement offer data; in the event the corresponding meeting planner cannot fulfill necessities corresponding to the requirement offer data, repeating the permitting selection step while excluding at least one of the predetermined number of vendors and repeating the enabling communications step; gathering facilities offer data, representing at least one offer by a vendor to supply hospitality facilities, and storing the facilities offer data in the database, the facilities offer data including at least a hospitality facility feature and facility offer price data; presenting blinded facilities offer data to one or more meeting planners; gathering specific facilities

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requirement data from a plurality of responsive meeting planners relative to the facilities offer data; presenting, to the at least one vendor supplying the facilities offer data, blinded specific requirement data; permitting the at least one vendor to select blinded specific requirement data representing a further predetermined number of the responsive meeting planners, enabling direct communications with the exchange of planner contact data between the further predetermined number of the responsive meeting planners and vendor contact data of the at least one vendor supplying the facilities offer data and, in the event the at least one vendor cannot fulfill the corresponding offer to supply hospitality facilities, repeating the permitting selection step and presenting the blinded facilities offer data step to the one vendor while excluding at least one of the further predetermined number of responsive meeting planners and repeating the enabling of communications step between the meeting planners and the one vendor is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the prior art.

Fraser ('115 of record) teaches a means to match buyers and sellers while preserving the identity of the seller to as great a degree as possible but does not disclose gathering requirement offer data and planner contact data into the system, matching meeting planner requirement offer data with the hospitality data and presenting blinded requirement data without revealing the identity of the corresponding meeting planner who supplied the requirement offer data to vendors associated with the hospitality facility data which march. Fraser always gives the property seller all information from prospective buyers. Additionally, Fraser does not teach or disclose of a computerized bidding method for matching hospitality facility data, representing vendors furnishing hotel facilities, meeting room facilities or other hospitality facilities, with requirement data, representing respective necessities of a plurality of meeting planners for a

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corresponding plurality of meetings or events, the bidding and matching method utilizing a client-server network with at least one server and a plurality of client computer systems nor does Fraser disclose or teach in the event the at least one vendor cannot fulfill the corresponding offer to supply hospitality facilities, repeating the permitting selection step and presenting the blinded facilities offer data step to the one vendor while excluding at least one of the further predetermined number of responsive meeting planners and repeating the enabling of communications step between the meeting planners and the one vendor.

Yates (WO 96/25012) discloses an information services provision and management method for providing information services over communications networks.

StarCite.com discloses an auctioning system for meetings and planning particularly with reference to bidding for hotel rooms, and other aspects concerning meetings. The emphasis is on planning, and the main concept is to develop a large database that contains as much information as possible about hotels including all aspects of meeting so that planners can plan and track meetings, amount spent, and have reference to suppliers and specific meeting and travel policies.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Carter (US 5926798) discloses a method and apparatus for performing computer-based on-line commerce using an intelligent agent. McNally et al (US 6384850) disclose information management and synchronous communications with menu generation. Bingham et al. (US 2002/0069094) disclose a system of reserving meeting facility resources. Stone et al (US 6446045) disclose a method for using computers to facilitate and control the creation of a

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plurality of functions. Rossman (EP 0779759A2) discloses a method and architecture for an interactive two-way data communication network. Mandeberg et al (WO9841936) disclose methods for generating digital multimedia store displays and menu boards. Lenz (WO9820434) discloses systems for displaying information and monitoring communications over the Internet.

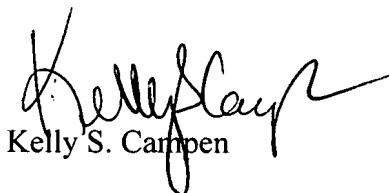
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kelly Campen whose telephone number is (571) 272-6740. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Thursday until 4pm.

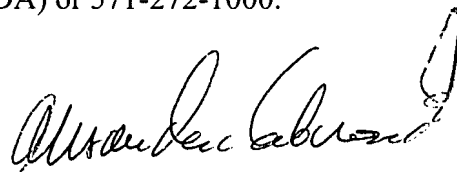
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Alexander Kalinowski can be reached on (571) 272-6771. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Kelly S. Campen



ALEXANDER KALINOWSKI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER